

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 25, 2007

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Attendance:	Gary Brochu	
	Julie Erickson	
	William Lutz	Arrived at 7:42 p.m.
	Diane Mancini	
	Kathleen O'Donnell-Moss	
	Christopher Puzio	
	Anthony Recck	Absent
	John Richards	
	Rachel Rochette	Absent

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Cicchetti; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Rena Klebart; Director of Business Operations Roman Czuchta; Principal of Griswold School Laurie Gjerpen; Principal of Willard School Robert J. Sullivan II; Interim Principal of Hubbard School Dr. Patricia Hatch; Principal of McGee Middle School Brian Benigni; and Principal of Berlin High School George Synnott.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brochu called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board of Education (“the Board”) meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Recognition of Dr. Patricia Hatch

Dr. Cicchetti along with the Board of Education and several members of the Hubbard school’s staff recognized Dr. Patricia Hatch for the work she has done this school year as Interim Principal at Hubbard School. Her efforts in the area of literacy instruction were noted, and praised.

Ms. Erickson reported on the high school graduation, congratulating the graduates and thanking Dr. Cicchetti and Mr. Brochu for their inspiring speeches.

Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported on the high school graduation, echoing Ms. Erickson’s comments.

Mr. Puzio reported on the high school graduation, also remarking the speeches were well done by Dr. Cicchetti, Mr. Brochu and Mr. Synnott.

Ms. Mancini reported on her attendance at the eighth grade promotion ceremonies and award ceremonies, commenting on a job well done by the administration, Dr. Cicchetti and Mr. Brochu. Ms. Mancini reported on the clerical negotiations.

Ms. Klebart reported on her attendance at both the high school graduation and the eighth grade promotion ceremonies.

Mr. Richards reported on the high school graduation and UpBeat’s “Up Half the Night”. Mr. Richards reported the Resources and Capacity-building Committee will bring to the Board this evening (1) personnel not covered

by collective bargaining; (2) transfers; and (3) the approval of educational specifications for the new high school.

Dr. Cicchetti reported on his attendance at the high school graduation, echoing the comments made by the Board members and also remarking how he is continually impressed by the respectful behavior of Berlin's students and parents at the graduation ceremonies. Dr. Cicchetti credited Mr. Synnott, members of the administrative team and the teachers that are part of the supervisory team. Dr. Cicchetti reported on the staff's successful and productive last day of school, particularly the morning orientation session on the new professional growth and evaluation plan.

Mr. Brochu reported on his meeting this morning with CABE and Board members from other school districts. The primary topic discussed with the State Board of Education was the implementation of a high school assessment or exit exam. Mr. Brochu discussed Berlin's senior writing portfolio, using it as an example as a form of an assessment and was amazed at all the questions received from the State Board of Education concerning it. Mr. Brochu reported tomorrow morning he will be at the State's Legislative Office Building to attend the CABE legislative wrap up and will report back to the Board in terms of the legislation discussion. Mr. Brochu reported on his attendance at both the high school graduation and the eighth grade promotion ceremonies.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Mrs. Elizabeth Mongillo addressed the Board concerning a letter she sent to the Board of Education and her questions presented in same regarding magnet schools. Mrs. Mongillo remarked that she is very excited to have representatives from CREC here tonight to present information on the magnet schools.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
- B. Request for Leave of Absence

Valerie Salazar, teacher of special education at Mary E. Griswold School, has submitted a letter requesting an unpaid leave of absence for the 2007-2008 school year for childrearing purposes. Mrs. Salazar gave birth to twin girls on May 24th.

- C. Transfers

Roman Czuchta, Director of Business Operations, provided a sheet of transfers that represent year end adjustments to accounts.

Moved by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Mr. Puzio, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

V. INFORMATION AND REPORTS

- A. Continuous Improvement Plans Status Report (Principals)

Principals Laurie Gjerpen, Robert J. Sullivan II, Brian Benigni and George Synnott provided highlights of the continuous improvement work that took place in their buildings during the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Synnott's presentation focused on the high school's self study and preparation for the October 2007 NEASC accreditation. The principals along with Ms. Klebart answered questions from the Board regarding the presentation. During the McGee presentation, Mr. Lutz arrived.

B. Presentation on Magnet School Options – CREC & ACES

At their April 23 meeting, members of the Leadership, Accountability and Measurement Committee discussed the district's future participation in magnet school programs. The Committee recommended that representatives from CREC (Capitol Region Education Council) and ACES (Area Cooperative Education Services) have an opportunity to present magnet school options to the Board. Joseph Townsley, Director of Magnet Schools at CREC, and Craig W. Edmondson, ACES Executive Director, Ann P. Dombroski, Assistant Executive Director at ACES and Karen Habegger Principal at Thomas Edison Middle School were in attendance at this evening's Board meeting and provided information on the various magnet school options as well as answered questions from the Board. Information provided by CREC and ACES was provided in the Board's agenda packet. Dr. Townsley provided general information on the legislative history, tuition, enrollment, an overview of each of the eight magnet schools and the future of magnet schools. Mr. Edmonson, Ms. Dombroski and Ms. Habegger gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning ACES, a copy which was provided to the Board and members of the audience.

C. New Policies and Revisions – 1st Reading – Handbook Policies

Accompanying the agenda was a set of new and revised Board of Education policies. The policies in the set listed below are those typically included in student/parent and staff handbooks, which are distributed at the beginning of the school year. Since so many of the existing Board policies are out of compliance and/or do not reflect current practice, it was the recommendation of the Board's attorney that the Board of Education move forward and approve these policies as a batch until the Board could initiate a more comprehensive review of all policies. The policies included in the batch are model policies from Shipman and Goodwin. Since this is a first reading, there is no Board action requested at this time. The policies will be brought back for a second reading and anticipated approval at the July 16 Board of Education meeting so that they can be included in the 2007-08 handbooks.

The set consists of the following policies:

- Notification Concerning Asbestos Management Plans
- Non-Discrimination (Students)
- Policy Regarding Pesticide Application on School Property
- Policy Regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Student Discipline
- Student Privacy
- Bullying Behavior in the Schools

- Confidentiality and Access to Student Records
- Policy Regarding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students)
- Student Attendance and Truancy
- Administration of Student Medications in the Schools
- Policy Regarding Search and Seizure
- Student Dress
- Prohibition Against Smoking
- Drug and Alcohol Use By Students
- Policy Regarding Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety
- Field Trips

Ms. Erickson questioned whether the Student Dress Policy as presented is applicable and, when implemented, the consequences for the entire school district. Dr. Cicchetti remarked he would be happy to take this policy back for administrative review and provide a revised policy at the July 16 meeting. The concern for the Board is that the policy be enforced universally in all the schools.

In response to Mr. Richards question whether the Board is approving the policies only or the attached regulations as well, Dr. Cicchetti responded the Board approves the policies only; however, the regulations have been provided to answer questions the Board may have in terms of the follow through for the policies and the recommendations of Shipman & Goodwin. The regulations have been included to give context and background information for the policies. The policies, without the regulations, will be brought back for the second reading and approval on July 16.

Ms. Erickson also had questions regarding the Bullying Behavior in the Schools Policy, which were answered by Mr. Brochu.

Mr. Brochu remarked this is the first reading, and the Board will have at its next Board meeting the policies alone, which will be subject to adoption. If Board members have questions or changes, they are to inform the administration prior to the July 16 meeting so that the administration can respond in a timely manner.

D. New Policy – 1st Reading – Policy JHGA – Food Allergies

A committee comprised of all school nurses, Director and Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing, Food Service Director Timothy Prosinski, McGee Middle School Principal Brian Benigni and Director of Pupil Personnel Services Margaret Butler met to explore (1) safeguards and supports in place in our schools for students with allergies; (2) identify the conditions with which the District is currently faced; and (3) research those areas in which additional support might be necessary. Celiac Disease and Peanut Allergies are the most prevalent conditions impacted by food. Celiac Disease and latex allergies result in a need for monitoring the materials used in our schools. A recommended policy and regulations are presented for review by the Board of

Education. Since this is a first reading, there is no Board action requested at this time. The policy will be brought back for a second reading and anticipated approval at the July 16 Board of Education meeting.

Ms. O'Donnell-Moss commented on the vague wording of the policy and is interested in revisiting the policy once it is implemented in terms of the policy's regulations having an infringement on other Board policies, i.e. segregation of students and violating student's privacy. Mr. Brochu remarked some of the specific regulations are statutory required.

Dr. Cicchetti explained that policy, by nature, is more general. It makes a statement on the part of the Board of Education as to what its philosophy is in addressing life threatening food allergies for students in the school district. The regulations are much more detailed and describe how the administration will implement the policy. Dr. Cicchetti requested that Board members email him any contradictions they find in the policy as written so that he can revise the document prior to the July 16 meeting.

VI. RECOMMENDED ACTION – Part I

- A. Berlin Public Health Nursing Service Agreement with Board of Education for July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008

The annual agreement between the Board of Education and the nursing service was provided to the Board.

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Puzio, to accept the agreement between the Berlin Public Health Nursing Service and the Berlin Board of Education for the period of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

- B. Policy Revision – 2nd Reading/Adoption – Policy GCE-R – Substitute Pay

At the June 11, 2007 meeting, Board members participated in a first reading of proposed revisions for Policy GCE-R: Substitute Pay. A proposed policy for the Board's consideration and action was provided to the Board which reflects what the current practice has been regarding substitute teachers.

Moved by Mr. Richards, second by Ms. Mancini, to approve the revisions to Board Policy GCE-R – Substitute Pay as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

- C. Approval of Educational Specifications for the New High School

John H. Kennedy, M.A., representative from NESDEC, presented the final Educational Specifications report for a new Berlin high school. Mr. Kennedy remarked that NESDEC believes the Educational Specifications reflect community and school values, district and school goals and are supported by national educational research. Mr.

Kennedy also noted the report is just the beginning of the process to build a new high school and that square footage and dollar amounts will be adjusted as Berlin goes through the process.

Mr. John Kennedy reviewed the project design and rationale for the building project, noting after completing an extensive analysis, the NESDEC team concluded in the Executive Summary that, "all schools are over capacity, with the greatest crowding at the high school and the McGee Middle School." The Report also noted that over the next decade, "Clearly, Berlin will grow in population." (Page 4)

Mr. Kennedy spent considerable time reviewing pages 12 through 31 of the NESDEC report, concerning the instructional spaces, building systems, interior building environment, site development and community uses. Mr. Kennedy answered questions from the Board concerning NESDEC's report as well as welcomed the Board's adjustments.

Moved by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Ms. Mancini, to approve Educational Specifications (Statement of Need) for a new Berlin high school as presented today and adjusted this evening and forward them to the Interim Town Manager for action in accordance with the Charter of the Town of Berlin.

In response to Mr. Lutz's question to Dr. Cicchetti regarding the Education Specifications meeting the educational needs of the Town of Berlin, Dr. Cicchetti remarked the Educational Specifications are excellent and focus, primarily, on the instructional needs of the school. Dr. Cicchetti respectfully requested that the Board modify the Motion made by Mr. Lutz to reflect the Motion that was presented in the expanded agenda.

Mr. Brochu remarked there is no pool in the Educational Specifications as there would be an 11 to 15 percent cost increase to the Town of Berlin and the accessibility to the public would be greatly diminished as compared to housing a pool in a separate structure on the same campus as the high school.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Gary Brochu

Mr. Czuchta reported on the direction the Educational Specifications will now follow.

D. Personnel Not Covered by Collective Bargaining

Mr. Richards presented a proposal for the continuation of employment for 2007-08 for personnel not covered by collective bargaining. The Board's Resources and Capacity-building Committee reviewed and discussed the proposal at its meetings of May 29 and June 25.

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Mancini, to approve the proposed salaries for personnel not covered by collective bargaining and issue them contracts for the 2007-2008 school year.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:55 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to go into Executive Session to discuss materials relative to negotiations.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

In attendance for Executive Session were Board members Brochu, Erickson, Lutz, Mancini, O'Donnell-Moss, Puzio and Richards. In addition, Dr. Cicchetti and Mr. Czuchta were present.

At 11:10 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mrs. O'Donnell-Moss, to return to regular session.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

VIII. RECOMMENDED ACTION – PART II

E. Possible Ratification of Custodial Contract

Negotiations with Local 1303-251 of Council 4, AFSCME AFL-CIO (Custodians) were recently completed and a Tentative Agreement was reached. It is recommended that the Board approve the Tentative Agreement.

Moved by Mrs. Erickson, second by Mrs. O'Donnell-Moss, to approve the tentative agreement reached between the Berlin Board of Education and Local 1303-251 of Council 4, AFSCME AFL-CIO (Custodians).

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Gary Brochu**

F. Possible Ratification of Clerical Contract

Negotiations with the Berlin Association of Educational Clerical Personnel were recently completed and a Tentative Agreement was reached. It is recommended that the Board approve the Tentative Agreement.

Moved by Mrs. Mancini, seconded by Mr. Richards, to approve the tentative agreement reached between the Berlin Board of Education and the Berlin Association of Educational Clerical Personnel.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Gary Brochu**

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mrs. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mrs. Erickson, to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Richards, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education